



Wide World

The Battle for the Hills of Central Korea lasted from January, 1951, to July, 1953. This photograph shows United Nations troops preparing to attack an enemy hill.

**KOREAN WAR** was the first war in which a world organization played a military role. The war was a major challenge for the United Nations (UN), which had been born only five years earlier.

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, when troops from Communist-ruled North Korea invaded South Korea. The UN called the invasion a violation of international peace and demanded that the Communists withdraw. After the Communists kept fighting, the UN asked its member nations to give military aid to South Korea. Sixteen UN countries sent troops to help the South Koreans, and 41 countries sent military equipment or food and other supplies. The United States sent more than 90 per cent of the troops, military equipment, and supplies. China fought on the side of North Korea, and Russia gave military equipment to the North Koreans. The war ended on July 27, 1953, when the UN and North Korea signed a truce. A permanent peace treaty has never been signed.

The Korean War was one of the bloodiest wars in history. About a million South Korean civilians were killed and several million were made homeless. About 580,000 UN and South Korean troops and about 1,600,000 Communist troops were killed or wounded or were reported missing.

#### **Causes of the War**

The Japanese gained control of Korea in 1895 and made it part of Japan in 1910. The Allies defeated

Japan in World War II (1939-1945), and U.S. and Russian forces moved into Korea. After the war, Russian troops occupied Korea north of the 38th parallel of north latitude, an imaginary line that cuts the country about in half. American troops occupied Korea south of the 38th parallel.

In 1947, the UN General Assembly, which represents all UN members, declared that elections should be held throughout Korea to choose one government for the entire country. Russia opposed this idea and would not permit elections in North Korea. On May 10, 1948, the people of South Korea elected a national assembly. The assembly set up the government of the Republic of Korea. On September 9, North Korean Communists established the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Both North and South Korea claimed the entire country, and their troops clashed near the border several times from 1948 to 1950. The United States removed its last troops from Korea in 1949 and indicated early in 1950 that Korea lay outside the main U.S. defense line in Asia. The Communists believed the time was right for military action.

#### **The Land War**

**Outbreak.** When North Korea invaded South Korea, the North Korean Army had about 135,000 men. Many of the men had fought for China and Russia during World War II. North Korea had airplanes, artillery, and tanks. The South Korean Army had about 95,000 men, but most of them were inexperienced and poorly trained. South Korea had few planes or heavy guns and no tanks. It put up little resistance to the enemy attack.

At their greatest strength, the South Korean and UN

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## THE KOREAN WAR

These maps show four stages of the Korean War. The first map shows the farthest extent of the North Korean invasion — to the Pusan Perimeter in September, 1950. The second map shows the site of the Inchon landing by the United Nations (UN) forces. Following this surprise move, the UN troops advanced as far north as the Yalu River by October, 1950. The third map shows the extent of the retreat by the UN forces after China entered the war in October, 1950. The fourth map shows the territory held by the two sides when they signed a truce on July 27, 1953.

Area occupied by communist forces

Area occupied by UN forces

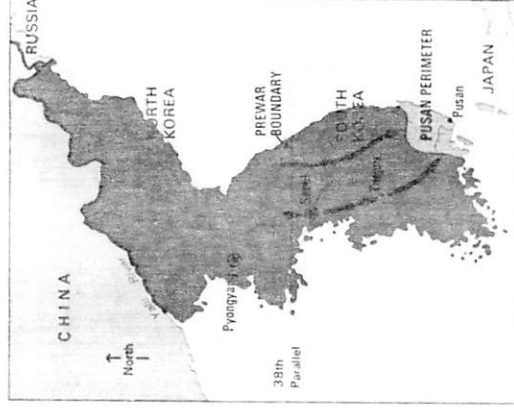
Movement of communist forces

Movement of UN forces

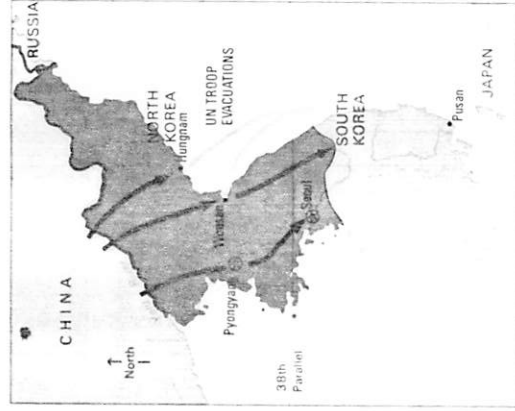
Capital

Other city

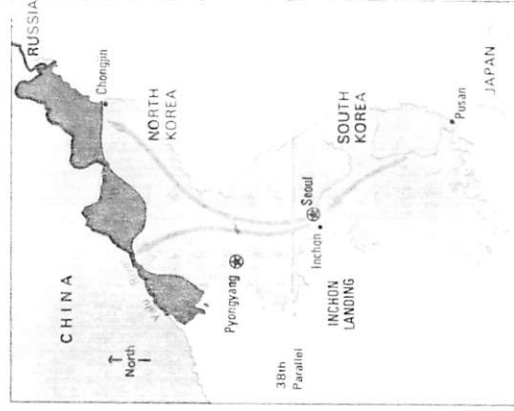
1. North Korean Invasion  
June to September, 1950



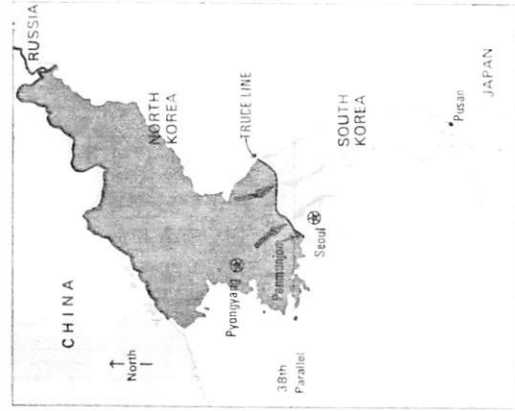
3. Chinese Offensive  
November, 1950 to January, 1951



2. UN Forces Move North  
September to October, 1950



4. UN Advance and Truce  
January, 1951 to July, 1953



forces consisted of almost 1,110,000 men. About 590,000 were South Koreans, and about 480,000 were Americans. About 39,000 came from Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Great Britain, Greece, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey.

The North Korean Army grew to more than 260,000 men during the war. China sent another 780,000 men to help the North Koreans.

On the day the war began, the UN Security Council issued a resolution demanding that the Communists stop fighting and retreat to the 38th parallel. Russia, a member of the 10-nation Council, could have vetoed the resolution. But Russia was boycotting Council meetings to protest Nationalist China's membership on the Council, and the Soviet delegate was absent when the vote on Korea was taken.

North Korea ignored the UN demand, and on June 27 its troops reached the outskirts of Seoul, the South

Korean capital. That same day, both President Harry S. Truman and the UN took action to try to halt the Communist advance. Truman ordered U.S. air and naval forces to South Korea and the UN asked its members to aid South Korea. Truman ordered American ground forces into action on June 30. Congress supported Truman's actions and the UN's policy, but did not formally declare war against North Korea.

On July 1, part of the U.S. Army 24th Infantry Division flew from Japan to the southern tip of Korea. The next day, these troops began to move into battle positions near Taejeon, about 75 miles (121 kilometers) south of Seoul. Troops from other UN nations began arriving in Korea shortly after the Americans. American troops first fought the North Koreans on July 5 at Osan, 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of Seoul. The Communists had already captured Seoul.

On July 9, with the approval of the UN Security Council, Truman named Gen. Douglas MacArthur

Distance Scale  
0 100 200 Miles  
0 100 200 300 Kilometers

WORLD TROOP MAPS

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE KOREAN WAR

## 1950

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- June 27 President Truman ordered U.S. air and naval forces to help defend South Korea. The UN asked member nations to aid South Korea.
- June 30 Truman ordered U.S. ground troops to South Korea.
- Sept. 8 Allied troops stopped the deepest Communist advance, at the Pusan Perimeter in southeastern South Korea.
- Sept. 15 Allied troops landed behind the enemy lines at Inchon.
- Sept. 26 General MacArthur, commander of UN forces, announced the capture of Seoul, the South Korean capital.
- Oct. 19 The Allies captured Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea.
- Oct. 25 China entered the war on the side of North Korea.
- Nov. 26 The Allies began to retreat after an attack by the Chinese.

## 1951

- Jan. 4 The Communists occupied Seoul.
- March 14 The Allies reoccupied Seoul after ending their retreat.
- April 11 Truman removed MacArthur and replaced him with General Ridgway.
- July 10 Truce talks began, but fighting continued.

## 1952

- April 28 Communist negotiators rejected a proposal for voluntary repatriation of prisoners.
- Oct. 8 The truce talks were broken off.

## 1953

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- July 27 A truce agreement was signed, and the fighting ended.

commander in chief of the United Nations Command. The command had authority over all the Allies—South Koreans, Americans, and the troops from other UN countries. MacArthur directed Allied operations from his headquarters in Tokyo, Japan. On July 13, Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker, head of the U.S. Eighth Army, became field commander of the Allied ground forces in Korea.

Units of the U.S. Army 1st Cavalry Division and 25th Infantry Division landed in Korea on July 19 to aid the outnumbered men of the 24th Division. But another city, Taejon, fell to the Communists on July 21.

**The Pusan Perimeter.** The U.S. 1st Marine Provisional Brigade and the 2nd Infantry Division of the Army arrived in South Korea in late July. But the Allies were forced back to the Pusan Perimeter by August 2. The Pusan Perimeter was a battle line in the southeast corner of South Korea. It extended roughly from the city of Pohang on the southeast coast, west around Taegu, and south and southeast nearly to Pusan. The Nakdong River was the boundary of most of the area.

The fighting at the Pusan Perimeter became a turning point in the war. The North Koreans lost about 58,000 men and much equipment while advancing to the area.



U.S. Army

**General Douglas MacArthur**, center, led the Inchon landing, a surprise move that turned the tide of war in the Allies' favor in September, 1950. After the landing, he and his aides inspected the area near Inchon and Seoul, above.

The rapid growth of American military strength gave General Walker flexibility in the use of his men. North Korea tried to break through the perimeter by making scattered attacks along it. Walker reacted by using reserves to meet each enemy thrust, keeping his main defense line intact. Overhead, U.S. planes provided air support and fired at the long enemy supply lines. More American tanks and artillery arrived at Pusan to strengthen the defense of the perimeter.

The North Koreans saw that the Allies were gaining military superiority. Desperately, they mounted a major attack and succeeded in crossing the Nakdong River on August 6. But U.S. Marines and Army infantrymen counterattacked and prevented a general breakthrough. The North Koreans advanced to within shelling distance of Taegu, but major losses of men and equipment forced them to pull back on August 25. The Communists attacked the Pusan Perimeter again on September 3. They captured Pohang three days later, but the Allies halted the enemy advance on September 8.

**The Inchon Landing** was a surprise move that changed the course of the war. On Sept. 15, 1950, marines and soldiers of the U.S. X (10th) Corps sailed from Japan to Inchon, on the northwest coast of South Korea. General MacArthur personally directed the amphibious landing. It required especially careful planning because the tides at Inchon vary more than 30 feet (9 meters). Each boat had to land at high tide because any boat near the shore when the tide dropped would be trapped in mud. The troops who landed at Inchon cut off the North Koreans in the Pusan Perimeter area from those north of Inchon.

Commanded by Maj. Gen. Edward M. Almond, the X Corps moved toward Seoul, 24 miles (39 kilometers) northeast of Inchon. After a bitter battle, MacArthur announced the capture of Seoul on September 26.

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Meanwhile, General Walker's men fought their way out of the Pusan Perimeter, inflicting heavy losses on the enemy. On September 28, they joined the X Corps near Seoul. MacArthur broadcast a demand for surrender, but North Korea rejected it.

**The Allies Move North.** Late in September, the Allies prepared to invade North Korea. South Korean troops crossed into North Korea on October 1 and captured the coastal cities of Wonsan, Hungnam, and Hamhung. The Eighth Army troops reached North Korea on October 8 and drove the North Koreans toward Pyongyang, the capital. They captured Pyongyang on October 19, and the Communists moved farther north.

From Pyongyang, the Eighth Army marched through northwestern Korea toward the Yalu River, the border between North Korea and China. Parts of the X Corps drove through northeastern Korea.

China warned against further advances toward its border. But General MacArthur, hoping to end the war before winter set in, ordered the Allies to press on. U.S. and Chinese troops first clashed on October 25, near the Chongjin Reservoir and at Onsong. They fought until November 6, when the Chinese suddenly withdrew. The Allies then pulled back to regroup.

MacArthur and his sources of information underestimated the size of the Chinese armies. More than 300,000 Chinese troops crossed into North Korea in October and November. MacArthur believed the Allied forces outnumbered the Chinese and that the Chinese would be used for defense only. He also thought that Allied air power could prevent additional Chinese troops from entering North Korea. Most of the Allied commanders shared MacArthur's confidence that the war would be over by Christmas. Allied planes roamed the length of Korea, and Allied warships sailed unchallenged along the coastlines, bombarding enemy ports. MacArthur ordered another advance on November 24.

**The Allies Retreat.** Hopes for a quick end to the war soon disappeared. China sent a huge force against the Allies on November 26 and 27 and forced them to retreat. By the end of November, the Communists had driven a wedge between Eighth Army troops in the west and the X Corps in the east. The X Corps had remained independent from the Eighth Army. Some military experts later criticized this strategy of two commands.

The Allies began to withdraw from Pyongyang on December 4. Four days later, 20,000 U.S. Marines and infantrymen, surrounded by Chinese, started a historic retreat from the Chongjin Reservoir to the port of Hungnam. By Christmas Eve, 105,000 U.S. and Korean troops, 91,000 refugees, and 17,500 vehicles had been evacuated by sea from Hungnam. In the west, the Communists crossed into South Korea and captured Korangpo, 28 miles (45 kilometers) from Seoul.

General Walker was killed in a jeep accident, and Lt. Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway took command of the Eighth Army on December 27. The Communists began to attack Seoul on New Year's Eve, and they occupied the city on Jan. 4, 1951. The Allies dug in about 25 miles (40 kilometers) south on January 10, and their retreat ended.

**The "Battle for the Hills."** Ridgway quickly restored the confidence of the Allied troops, and they soon

inflicted heavy losses on the enemy. The Allies began to move north again on Jan. 16, 1951. In 15 days, they were in position to fire on Seoul. Ridgway used a new tactic calling for slower advances that would wipe out all enemy forces instead of by-passing some.

The Allies reoccupied Seoul on March 14 without a fight. They advanced a short distance into North Korea by June. Then the war changed. The two sides dug in and began fighting along a battle line north of the 38th parallel. Truce talks began in July, but fighting continued for two more years. Neither side made important advances, but they fought many bitter battles for strategic positions. During this period, the war was sometimes called the "Battle for the Hills." Battlefields included Bloody Ridge, Finger Ridge, Heartbreak Ridge, Old Baldy, and Pork Chop Hill.

One of the most controversial events of the war took place on April 11, 1951, when President Truman removed General MacArthur from command and replaced him with Ridgway. The President's action resulted from a dispute between MacArthur and defense leaders in Washington as to how the Allies should conduct the war. MacArthur wanted to bomb bases in Manchuria, a part of China, and use other "all-out measures." Truman and his military advisers believed such actions might lead to a third world war. MacArthur continued to issue public statements declaring that there was no substitute for total victory. Truman decided he could no longer accept MacArthur's open disagreement with national policy. Ridgway went to Tokyo to replace MacArthur, and Lt. Gen. James A. Van Fleet became commander of the Eighth Army.

#### Air and Naval Activity

**The Air War.** The Korean War marked the first battles between jet aircraft. Early in the conflict, Allied

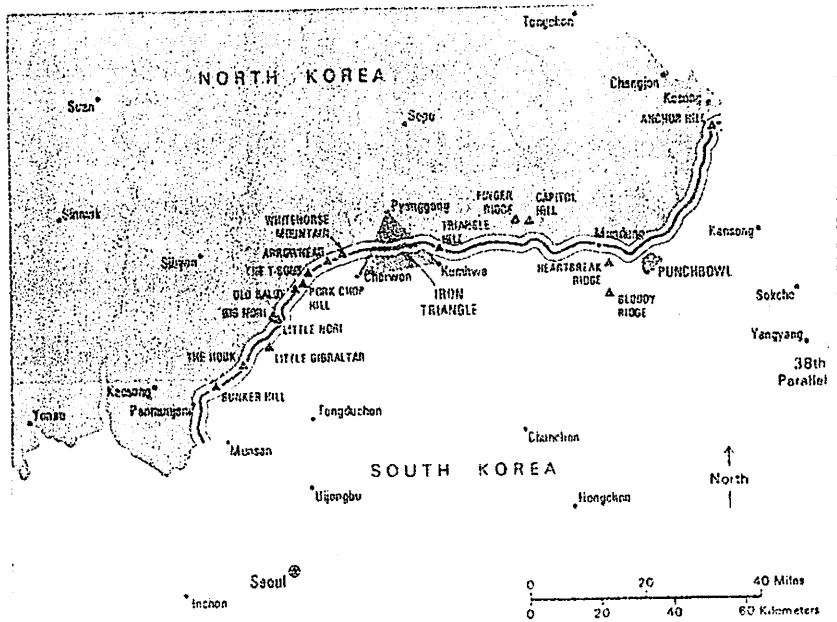


White World

**Chinese and North Korean Negotiators** stalled the peace talks for months by rejecting the UN demand that prisoners be allowed to decide whether to return home. Chinese Maj. Gen. Hsieh Fang, second from left, was the chief Communist spokesman.

Korean War Truce Line

The truce line between North Korea and South Korea was established by the armistice of July 27, 1953. A buffer zone, 1 1/4 miles (2 kilometers) wide, was created along each side of the line. The map shows many hills and ridges that were the scenes of bitter fighting.



WORLD BOOK map

bombers and fighter planes based in Japan, Okinawa, and South Korea roared over North Korea unopposed. They supported Allied troops, killed enemy troops, and damaged Communist bases.

Russia soon began to supply North Korea with MIG-15 jets, and dogfights became an important part of the war. As many as 100 to 150 U.S. F-86 Sabre jets and Russian-built MIG-15's took part in some air battles. All the dogfights occurred over North Korea because Allied planes were not permitted to cross the Yalu River, and the MIG-15's never flew south of the 38th parallel. Most of the battles took place in "MIG Alley," an area between the Yalu and Pyongyang.

The Allies used helicopters to carry wounded men from battle zones to hospitals. Helicopter pilots made daring rescues of Allied fliers who had been shot down. For the first time, helicopters carried troops into combat.

The U.S. Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps lost more than 2,000 planes during the Korean War. Most of them were shot down by Communist anti-aircraft guns. Allied fliers destroyed more than 1,000 Communist planes. Navy and Marine fliers killed about 100,000 Communist troops, and Air Force fliers killed about 181,800.

**Naval Warfare.** The Allied naval forces included 80 destroyers, 16 aircraft carriers, 8 cruisers, and 4 battleships. The U.S. Navy helped troops land by firing shells at enemy targets on shore. Wonsan, a Communist oil refining and industrial city, was under naval siege for more than two years.

Five Navy ships were sunk and 82 were hit during the war. The vessels sunk were the minesweepers *Pledge*, *Partridge*, *Pirate*, and *Magpie*, and the tug *Sarsi*.

## The End of the War

**The Truce Talks.** Hopes for peace increased when Jacob Malik, the Russian delegate to the UN, pro-

posed a cease-fire on June 23, 1951. On June 30, Ridgway, acting on instructions from Washington, suggested a meeting between Allied and Communist military officers to discuss a truce.

The truce talks began July 10 at Kaesong and were moved to Panmunjom on October 25. A settlement seemed near on November 27, when both sides agreed that the existing battle line would be the final dividing line between North and South Korea if a truce were reached within 30 days. This agreement had the effect of limiting combat, because neither side had much to gain by winning ground it might later have to surrender.

Several issues, especially *voluntary repatriation of prisoners*, prevented a settlement within the 30-day period. The UN Command had insisted that prisoners of both sides be allowed to choose whether or not they would return to their homelands. Many Chinese prisoners of the Allies had fought against the Communists during the Chinese civil war. They staged a violent protest against a forced return to life under Communism. Some North Korean captives also refused to return home. The Communists could not agree to the UN demand without admitting that Communism had some faults.

By late April, 1952, the truce talks were firmly deadlocked over voluntary repatriation. Fighting continued along the battle line. On October 8, the UN Command adjourned the truce talks. It said the talks would resume when the Communists were ready to offer a helpful suggestion for settling the one remaining issue—voluntary repatriation.

General Mark W. Clark replaced Ridgway as commander in chief of the United Nations Command in May, 1952, and Dwight D. Eisenhower became President of the United States in January, 1953. Then, on March 5, 1953, Russian premier Joseph Stalin died. After Stalin's death, Russian leaders began talking of

## KOREAN WAR

the need to settle disputes peacefully. On March 28, the Communists accepted an earlier offer by the UN Command for an exchange of sick and wounded prisoners. The Communists also indicated that the truce talks should be resumed. The prisoner exchange took place in April and May. The UN Command received 684 sick and wounded men, including 149 Americans. It returned 6,670 Communist prisoners.

The truce talks were resumed on April 26, and the Communists accepted voluntary repatriation. They agreed to let prisoners indicate their choice to the Neutral Nations' Repatriation Commission, which consisted of representatives of Czechoslovakia, India, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland.

A truce was signed on July 27, 1953, and the fighting ended. A buffer zone  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles (4 kilometers) wide along the final battle line divided the two sides. South Korea gained about 1,500 square miles (3,880 square kilometers) of territory. Both sides agreed not to increase their military strength. A Military Armistice Commission, with representatives from both sides, was set up to enforce the truce terms. The truce also provided for a political conference to work out a final settlement.

After the truce was signed, each side charged the other with torture and starvation of prisoners, and other war crimes. The North Koreans and Chinese Communists were also accused of brainwashing prisoners (see BRAINWASHING). The UN General Assembly adopted a general resolution condemning such acts.

The United States spent about \$67 billion on the war. Almost all parts of Korea were heavily damaged. About 1 million civilians were killed in South Korea, and property damage was estimated at more than \$1 billion. Statistics were not given for civilian deaths and damage in North Korea.

**Prisoner Exchange.** The UN Command and the Communists completed an exchange of 88,559 prisoners in September, 1953. The Neutral Nations' Repatriation Commission took custody of prisoners who refused to return to their homelands. The truce provided that delegates from the various countries could visit these prisoners and try to persuade them to go home. But 14,227 Chinese, 7,582 North Koreans, 325 South Koreans, 21 Americans, and 1 Briton refused to return. Some of these men later changed their minds.

**Peace Negotiations.** In 1954, Russian officials and representatives of countries that had fought in Korea met in Geneva, Switzerland. But the negotiators failed

to draw up a permanent peace plan. Nor were they able to settle the question of unifying Korea. A permanent peace treaty has never been signed.

For information about events in Korea since the war, see KOREA (History).

WALTER G. HERMES

### Related Articles in WORLD BOOK include:

Clark, Mark W.  
MacArthur, Douglas  
Ridgway, Matthew B.

Truman, Harry S.  
(The Korean War)  
United Nations  
Van Fleet, James A.

### Outline

- I. Causes of the War
- II. The Land War
  - A. Outbreak
  - B. The Pusan Perimeter
  - C. The Inchon Landing
  - D. The Allies Move North
- III. Air and Naval Activity
  - A. The Air War
  - B. Naval Warfare
- IV. The End of the War
  - A. The Truce Talks
  - C. Peace Negotiations
  - B. Prisoner Exchange

### Questions

- What events led to the Korean War?  
Why was the role of the UN unique in the war?  
What was the Pusan Perimeter? MIG Alley?  
Why did the Inchon Landing require especially careful planning?  
Why did the UN Command adjourn the truce talks in 1952?  
Why did Russia fail to veto the UN Security Council resolution of June 25, 1950?  
What were the provisions of the 1953 truce?  
Why was the last part of the war sometimes called the "Battle for the Hills"?  
Why did President Truman relieve General MacArthur from command?  
What two aviation "firsts" occurred during the war?

### Reading and Study Guide

See *Korean War* in the RESEARCH GUIDE/INDEX, Volume 22, for a *Reading and Study Guide*.

**KOREMATSU V. UNITED STATES.** See SUPREME COURT OF THE U.S. (table: Landmark Decisions).

**KORIN**, *koh riñ*, **OGATA**, *ohgah tah* (1658-1716), was a Japanese painter. His art is best seen on folding screens intended to beautify a room. He was an expert in turning his subjects, usually landscapes and close-ups of flowers, into novel, eye-catching designs. He had an extraordinary sense of color and pattern, but did not care for storytelling in drawing. His painting, *Matsushima*, appears in color in the PAINTING article. He was born in Kyoto.

ALEXANDER C. SOPER

**KORNBERG, ARTHUR.** See CELL (The 1900's); NOBEL PRIZES (table: Nobel Prizes for Physiology or Medicine—1959).

**KORNILOV, LAVR.** See RUSSIA (October Revolution).

**KORSAKOFF'S PSYCHOSIS.** See ALCOHOLISM.

**KORYO.** See KOREA (Early Years).

**KORZENIOWSKI, JÓZEF.** See CONRAD, JOSEPH.

**KORZYBSKI, ALFRED.** See SEMANTICS.

**KOSCIUSKO, MOUNT.** See MOUNT KOSCIUSKO.

**KOSCIUSKO**, *KAHS ih UHS koh*, or *kawsh CHOOSH kaw*, **THADDEUS** (1746-1817), also spelled KOSCIUSZKO, was a Polish patriot who fought for freedom in America and Poland. Because of this, he is often called the *Hero of Two Worlds*.

Kosciusko arrived in America in August, 1776. He

### — MILITARY CASUALTIES IN THE KOREAN WAR —

	Total Casualties	Dead	Wounded	Prisoners or Missing
South Korea	400,167	58,127	175,743	166,297
United States	162,708	54,246	103,284	5,178
Other United Nations	17,260	3,194	11,297	2,769
	580,135	115,567	290,324	174,244
	Total Casualties	Dead or Wounded	Prisoners	
China	967,000	945,000	22,000	
North Korea	624,000	522,000	102,000	
	1,591,000	1,467,000	124,000	